

## ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

**HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 27, 2004*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to join my colleagues in the United States Congress and world leaders in celebrating the creation of the State of Israel on this 56th anniversary of Israel's Independence Day. On this historic day, we honor the achievements of the Jewish people and the Jewish state, and salute a young and proud nation that has accomplished so much in so little time.

In the 56 years since independence, Israel has welcomed immigrants from all corners of the world as her population grew from 806,000 to 6,780,000 people, including over a million new immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Israel today is a vibrant democracy, the only democracy in the Middle East, and a world leader in technology and agricultural innovation for arid regions.

We must remember that these great achievements have come at a great cost. More than 20,000 Israel Defense Force members have died fighting for the cause of a Jewish state in the years since the war of independence—over 185 Israeli soldiers in the past year alone, since the last Remembrance and Independence Days.

And we must also honor and remember those innocent civilians who have been killed by terrorists trying to destroy the State of Israel and her people. In the last year, at least 176 people were murdered and 906 wounded in terrorist attacks.

On this Day of Independence, the United States of America and Israel stand side-by-side in our commitment to democracy, to peace, and to the State of Israel. The United States will never flinch and will never waiver in its support for the safety and security of the State of Israel and of her people.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD W. LAUGHLIN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

**HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 27, 2004*

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct privilege to stand before my colleagues in the House to pay tribute to a special person in Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. This year, Lieutenant Colonel Richard W. Laughlin, Professor of Military Science and Leadership at Bowling Green State University, will retire after 20 years of distinguished service in the United States Army.

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Colonel Laughlin graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in May of 1984. His hard work and dedication at West Point, the Army's pinnacle of leadership, was exceptional. Upon graduation, he branch selected artillery.

LTC Laughlin graduated from the Field Artillery Officers Basic Course in 1985, and his competence and professionalism in that field

served the Nation well as he advanced in rank. Over a period of 8 years, serving at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and at Fort Richardson, Alaska, LTC Laughlin was promoted to first lieutenant and then to captain while serving as Fire Direction Officer, Battery Executive Office, S2, Headquarters Battery Commander, and as assistant S3.

Assigned to the University of Pittsburgh as an assistant professor for military science in 1993, LTC Laughlin was awarded the Governor's Cup for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as the best ROTC battalion in the state in 1994. While serving as Chief of Operations for the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas, he was promoted to the rank of major. He then transferred to Fort Hood, Texas to serve as Rear Detachment Commander, 82nd Field Artillery. Under his able leadership, the 82nd trained and deployed thousands of combat-ready soldiers to the Bosnian conflict in 1999.

LTC Laughlin began his current assignment as a Professor of Military Science at BGSU in 2000. Under his guidance, the ROTC program has been forged into a respected hallmark of the University, with program members participating in numerous campus events. LTC Laughlin's 20-year commitment of distinguished service to his country leaves as its legacy a stronger Army of able combat-ready forces, and a generation of students inspired by his dedication and courage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to the steadfast patriotism and unwavering spirit of Lieutenant Colonel Richard C. Laughlin. I am confident that his example will serve as an inspiration to a new generation of soldiers who, like him, will be brave and vigilant guardians for the United States and its citizens. May he now enjoy the freedoms and liberties that he has so ably helped to protect over his distinguished career.

## ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 27, 2004*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the Members of the House to join us in recognizing past instances of genocide and reaffirming our Nation's commitment to never again allow the perpetration of such atrocities anywhere on this earth. House Resolution 193 appropriately reaffirms America's obligation to international genocide conventions, and underscores the importance of recognizing past crimes against humanity, including the Holocaust and the Armenian, Cambodian, and Rwandan genocides.

We all know that silence in the face of genocide only encourages those who would commit such atrocities in the future. Israel Charney, the noted genocide and Holocaust scholar, has written extensively about the psychology of genocide denial. He has explained to the world what we should all know from history: to deny genocide is to celebrate the mass murder and to endorse the doctrine of corrupt power that brought about the destruction in the first place. To erase agonizing memories of genocide only mocks the sensibilities of the victims and their descend-

ents—in essence, once again, victimize the victims.

For this reason, America must recognize the Turkish massacre and displacement of Armenians as an act of genocide. The House Judiciary Committee, upon its unanimous approval of the Genocide Resolution, described the Armenian Genocide in the following terms:

Beginning in 1915, the Islamic Turkish state of the Ottoman Empire sought to end the collective existence of the Christian Armenian population. From 1915 through 1918, during World War I, the Ottoman Empire subjected the Armenian people to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation. The atrocities were renewed between 1920 and 1923. It is estimated that one and a half million Armenians were killed out of over two million Armenians who had lived in the Ottoman Empire. It should be noted that these activities ceased with the institution of the new Republic of Turkey in October, 1923.

U.S. recognition of the Armenian genocide is long past due. By failing to admit and recognize atrocities that clearly took place we undermine our Nation's credibility and commitment to combat genocide. On April 24, President Bush issued his annual message in remembrance of the victims of the Armenian Genocide—only he failed to use the word "genocide." In failing to refer to the Armenian Genocide accurately, he has turned his back on his own campaign pledge and on 190 Members of Congress who want the Armenian Genocide recognized.

It is not enough to say "never again." We must take concrete steps to give it meaning and to bolster our own resolve. Passing House Resolution 193 is a small but important step in this ongoing effort to thwart those who would commit genocide. It is the least we can do for the millions who have been killed in Turkey, Germany, Rwanda, and Cambodia. Understanding the lessons of these tragedies will help prevent future crimes against humanity.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to honor the victims of genocide, and to urge my colleagues to always remain cognizant of the pledge our Nation has made to prevent future acts of genocide.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL DISASTER CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

**HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 27, 2004*

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that would protect the credit histories of consumers residing in areas where damages caused by a disaster impede the efficient payment of debts. My bill would provide an important safeguard for individuals living in disaster-prone regions in order to ensure that their financial histories are not adversely affected by an inability to make prompt payments during and in the immediate aftermath of a Federally Declared Disaster Area.

I am concerned that public law does not provide a consistent legal means for consumers to rectify credit discrepancies occurring during a period in which their residence was included in a Federally Declared Disaster